

CEO RESEARCH 2020

LEADERSHIP
IN A POST-
PANDEMIC
WORLD



CRITICALEYE

The peer to peer Board Community



“Criticaleye’s latest CEO Research gauged business leaders’ confidence in May 2020 at the height of the global pandemic. With much of Europe in lockdown, Asia on high-alert for a second wave and the US and South America on the brink of taking over as the new epicentre, the results were telling: 59% of chief executives predict that it will be more than 18 months until their trading levels rebound and 46% forecast an annual fall in revenues of over 20%.

Worryingly, just when adept leadership may determine which businesses survive, only 25% of CEOs are confident their senior team has the ability to navigate uncertainty. And while 66% say their strategy remains relevant, 58% say Board debate on this still needs to improve.

At a time when the pressure on leaders is immense, 58% of CEOs say they feel isolated in their role. With investors about to become more demanding and the financial assistance of many governments set to end, they need to get support structures in place. They must call on the experience of their non-executives and seek other ways to pull external insight into their organisations.

The business outlook remains unclear, and which changes to customers, competitors and wider stakeholders will prove permanent remains to be seen, but the best CEOs are not waiting for perfect information. They have put developing talent at the top of their agenda and identified customers as their most challenging stakeholders. They are making decisions and acting on them but retaining the ability to respond as the picture becomes clearer. To succeed in this, external reference points will prove more crucial than ever.”



Jamie Wilson
Managing Director
Criticaleye

Findings from Criticaleye's CEO Research 2020



Only **25%** of CEOs feel fully confident their team can navigate strategic uncertainty



59% of CEOs predict it will take 18 months or more for their trading to recover



66% of CEOs believe their strategy is still very relevant, despite the disruption of COVID-19



33% of CEOs say how they engage with customers is the biggest change occurring in their business



97% of CEOs say external reference points enhance the performance of senior executives



58% of CEOs feel isolated in their role

Strategy

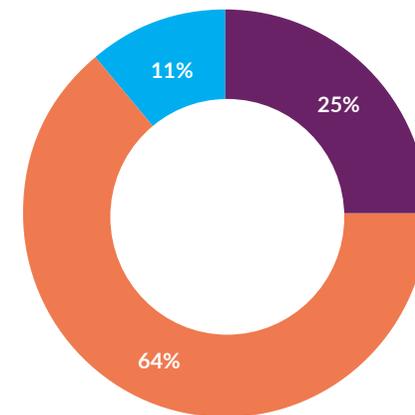
Criticaleye offers senior executives a unique opportunity to discuss and reflect upon strategy with peers and experts

**Only 25% of CEOs
feel fully confident
their senior leadership
team can navigate
strategic uncertainty**

“We are stronger in operational rather than strategic leadership, so we are reshaping the team to address this during the current period of uncertainty.”

CEO Research Participant

Does your senior leadership team have the ability to navigate strategic uncertainty?

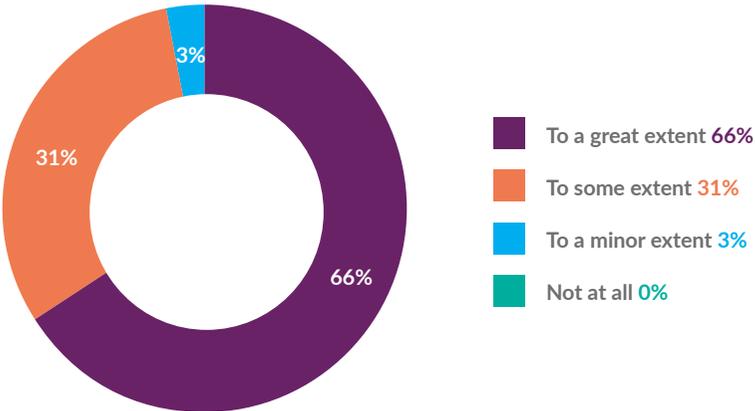


Most CEOs think their business strategy is still relevant. However, 59% say it will take 18 months or more to return to pre-COVID-19 trading levels

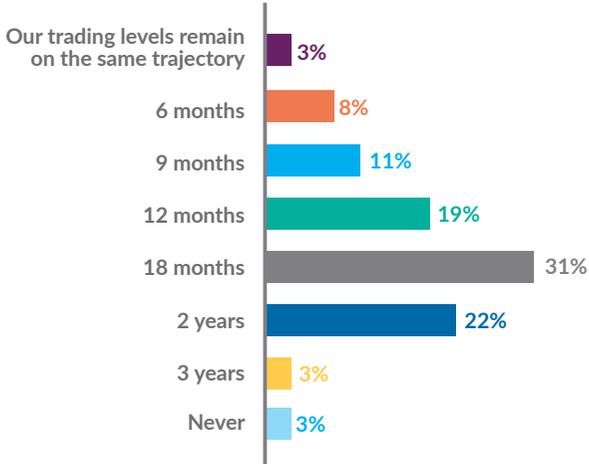
“The long-term strategy is still relevant but priorities will need to change over the next 24 months.”

CEO Research Participant

Is your business strategy still relevant?

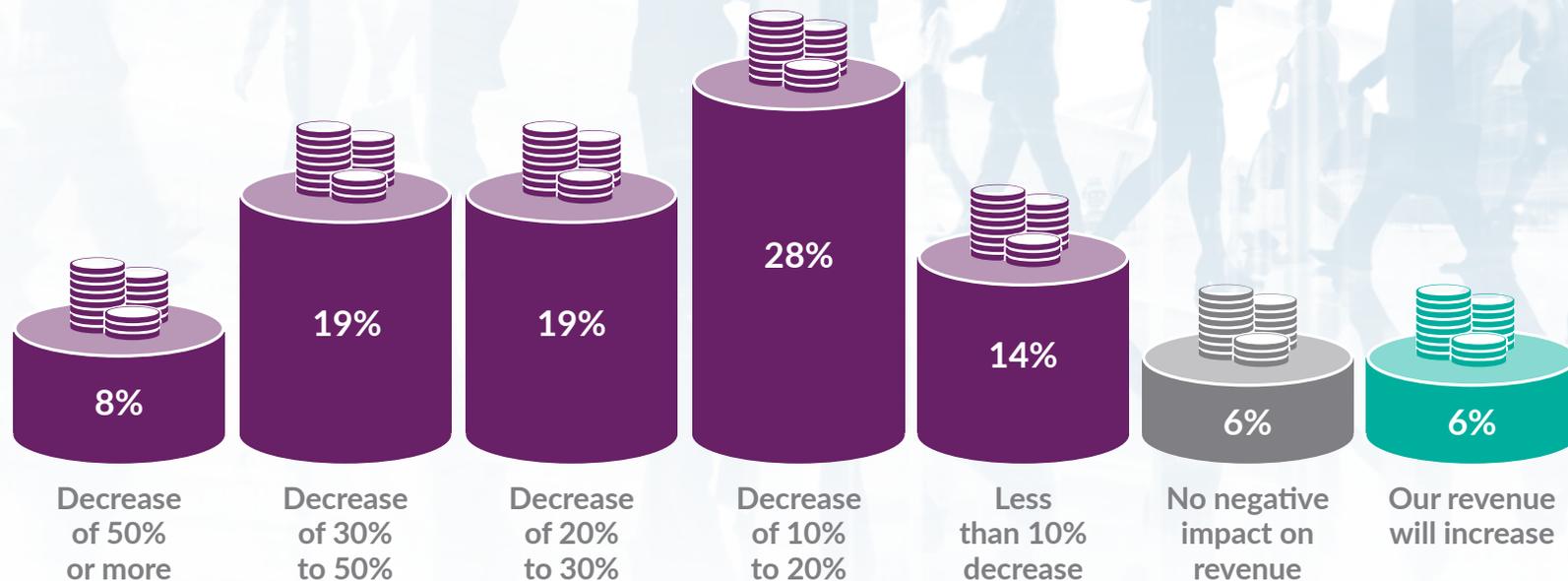


When do you expect your organisation to return to pre-COVID 19 trading levels?



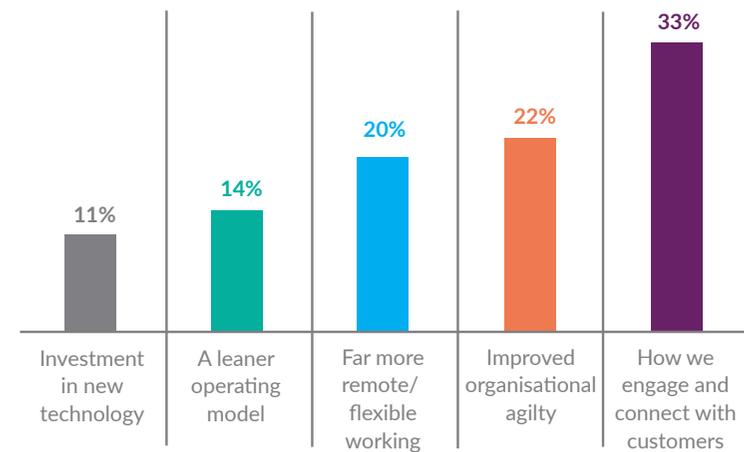
Most leaders expect a drop in revenues of between 10% and 50% over the next 12 months

What impact will COVID-19 have on revenues over the next 12 months?



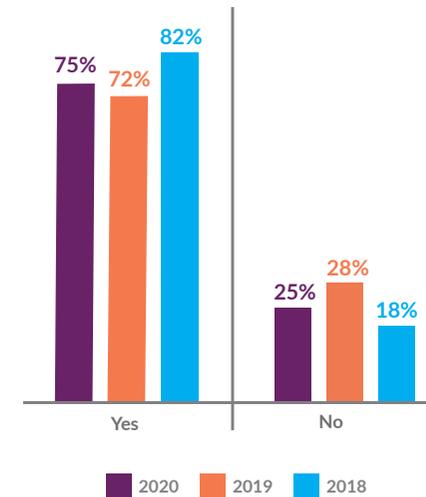
COVID-19 has accelerated changes in how organisations deliver products and services to their customers

Where do you see the biggest changes occurring in your organisation?



Although most CEOs believe their Chair does add value, there has been a decline from 82% to 75% over the last two years

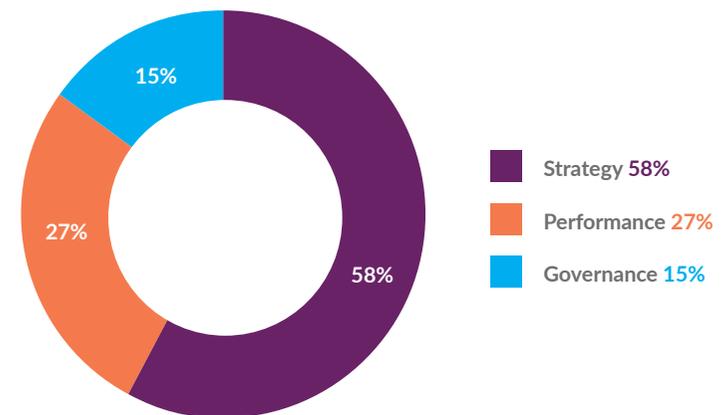
Does your Chair add value in terms of supporting the goals and objectives of the executive team?



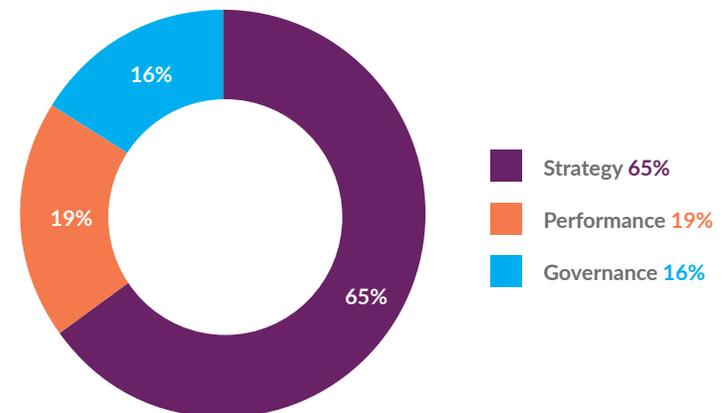
Although improving the quality of strategic debate with the Board remains the top concern for CEOs in 2020, discussion around performance has become more pressing

In which of the following areas do you need to improve the quality of debate with the Board?

2020



2019



People remain top of the agenda for CEOs in 2020

Priorities in 2020

1. Retaining key talent and developing skills
2. Navigating COVID-19
3. Cost reduction
4. Funding and refinancing
5. Organisational design

Priorities in 2019

1. Retaining key talent and developing skills
2. Digital disruption
3. Improved performance management
4. Cost reduction
5. Rebuilding the leadership team

Priorities in 2018

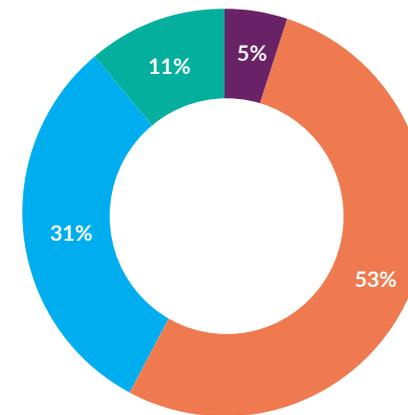
1. Retaining key talent and developing skills
2. Innovation
3. Digital disruption
4. Improved cross-team collaboration
5. Cost reduction

Leadership

Criticleye enables and develops great leadership with the perfect mix of peer to peer discussion and high-impact case studies

Over half of CEOs
(58%) feel isolated in
their roles to some
or a great extent

As a CEO, do you feel isolated in your role?



Seeking inspiration from other sectors continues to be where CEOs say they most need to improve

2020		2019	2018	
1	▶	1	1	Seeking inspiration / fresh thinking from other sectors
2	▲	3	2	Building alignment in the senior leadership team
3	▲	4	6	Ability to influence the board
4	▼	2	4	Supporting innovation
5	▲	6	5	Strategic thinking
6	▼	5	3	People skills and communication

For comparisons with where other executives need to focus, see page 21.

94% of CEOs say external mentors improve executive performance

Click [here](#) to see Criticaleye Board Mentors talk about their experience of mentoring and the benefits.

Featuring:

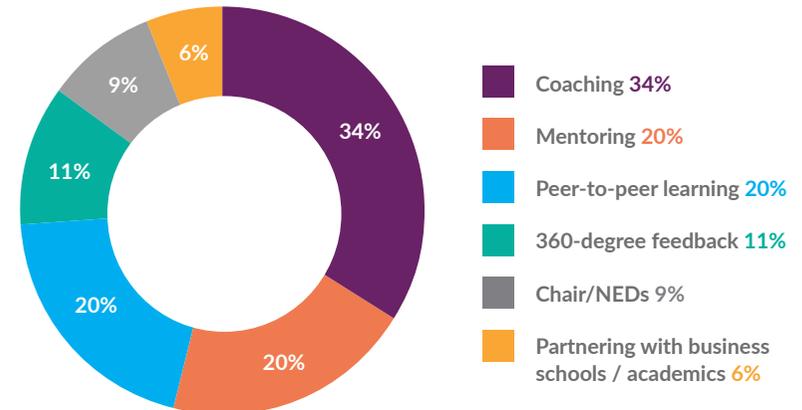
Mark Whitby, Chair, Simms International

Keith Edelman, Chair, Revolution Bars Group and PennPetro Energy

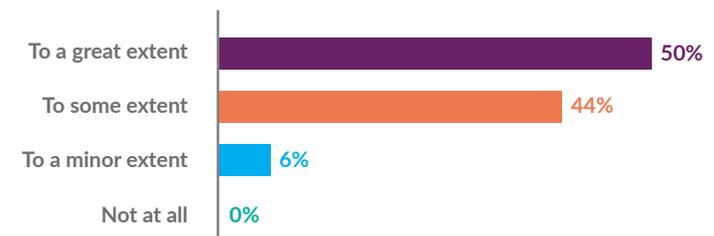
Phil Smith, Chair, IQE

Neil Griffiths, Non-executive Director, City Pub Group

What have you found to be the most effective leadership development tool for senior executives?



Does external mentoring improve the performance of senior executives?



97% of CEOs agree that business performance is enhanced when executives have access to external reference points

Click [here](#) to see leaders in our Community discuss why collaboration is important, and which interactions were most valuable to them.

Featuring:

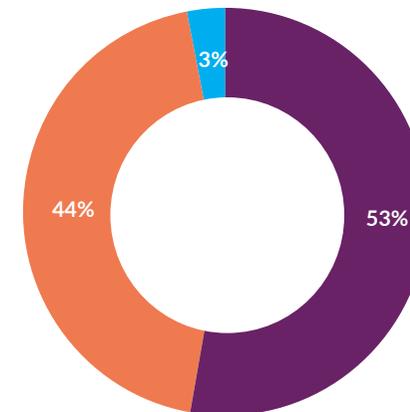
Jill Easterbrook, Non-executive Director
Auto Trader Group

Jaidev Janardana, CEO, Zopa

Paul Cardoen, Non-executive Director
Atlantic Business International

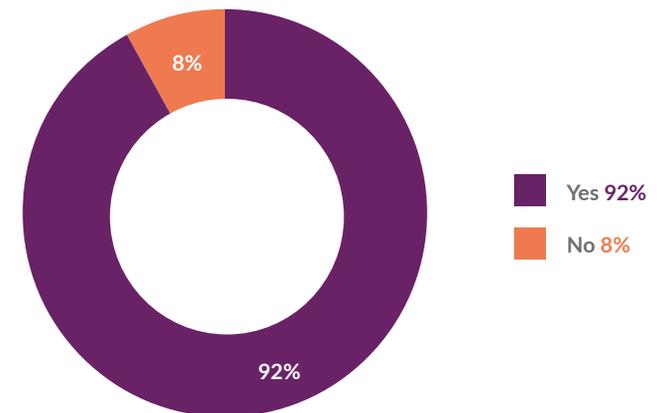
Paula Dowdy, SVP & GM EMEA, Illumina

Is business performance enhanced if executives have access to reference points outside of their organisation / sector?



Although the majority (92%) believe investment in leadership development should be prioritised over fees to headhunters, this isn't happening in practice

In your view, should more be spent on leadership development and support for senior executives, as opposed to headhunters?



In your experience, on which of the following do organisations spend more?

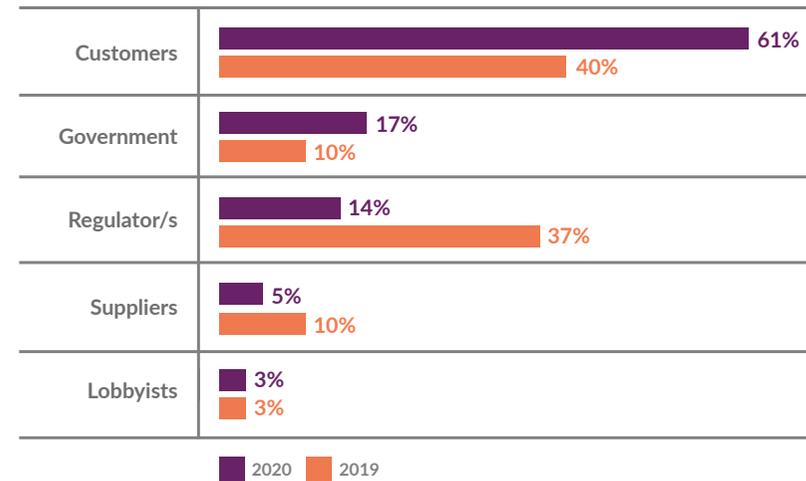


Stakeholders

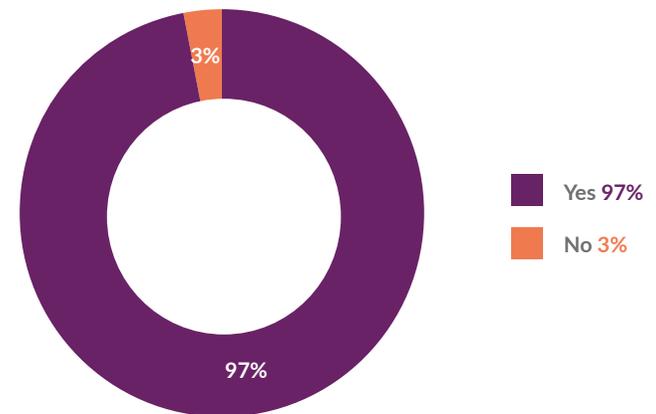
CriticalEye provides the right reference points to manage and navigate increasingly important stakeholder relationships

In 2020, the priority given to customers has increased significantly

Who is your most challenging external stakeholder?

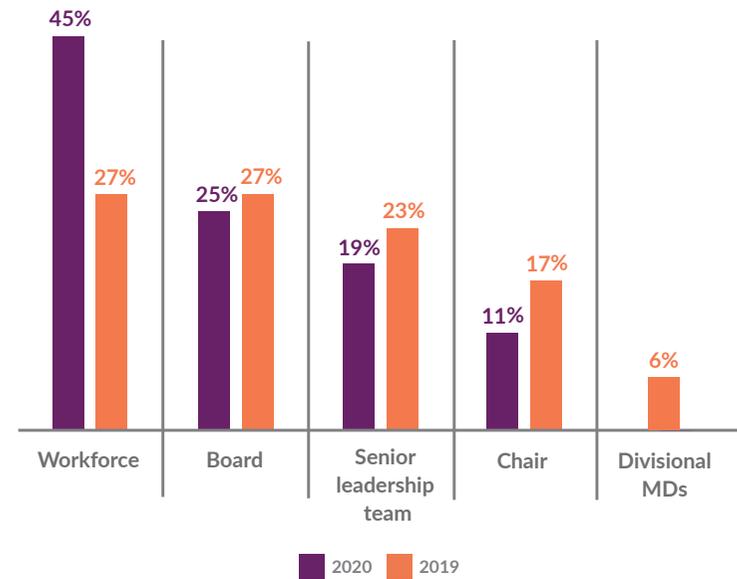


Do you expect shareholders / investors to start demanding clear answers about how your organisation will emerge through this situation



Managing employee safety and wellbeing has taken a front seat as a result of COVID-19

Who is your most challenging internal stakeholder?



CEOs revealed the top three areas of improvement for their colleagues and themselves

CEOs

1.

Seeking inspiration / fresh thinking from other sectors

2.

Building alignment in the senior leadership team

3.

Ability to influence the board

CFOs

1.

Strategic thinking

2.

People skills and communication

3.

Seeking inspiration / fresh thinking from other sectors

NEDs

1.

Strategic thinking

2.

Commercial understanding of the business

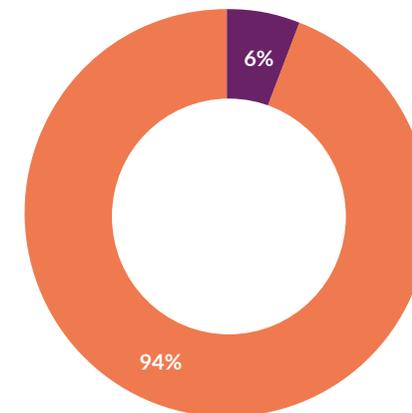
3.

Seeking inspiration / fresh thinking from other sectors



**Only 6% of CEOs
expect the CFO
to succeed them
in their role**

Is your most likely successor the CFO?



What our leaders say

How can leadership teams prepare for business model disruption



We asked experienced non-executives about how leadership teams can prepare for disruption.

Thanks to David Tyler, Non-executive Chair, Hammerson; Mike Tye, Chair, Moto Hospitality Group (& Criticaleye Board Mentor); and Mark Spelman, Member of the Executive Committee at the World Economic Forum (& Criticaleye Board Mentor), for offering their observations on what skills and capabilities leaders need in a disruptive world.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

Leading in a disruptive market



Disruption calls for even greater strength in leadership.

Thanks to Jane Griffiths, Non-executive Director, Johnson Matthey (& Criticaleye Board Mentor); Richard Buxton, Group People and Sustainability Director, Brewin Dolphin; Anthony Fletcher, CEO, Graze; Helen Murray, Chief Customer Solutions Officer, Webhelp UK; Des Pullen, Executive Consultant, Associated British Foods; Mandy Ferries, Senior HR Leader, Europe, Amazon Transportation Services; and Mike Hughes, President UK & Ireland, Schneider Electric, for sharing their views.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

The power of mentoring and peer-to-peer networks



Taken at our CEO Retreat, our speakers talk about the benefits of sharing ideas with their peers.

Thanks to Amanda Nelson, CEO, Vodafone Hungary, Vodafone Group; Sandy Khanna, former MD, Group Business Services, BT Group; Yetunde Hofmann, Non-executive Director, CIPD (& Criticaleye Board Mentor); Nigyar Makhmudova, Executive Vice President, Growth & Innovation, Danone; and Samantha Barber, Non-executive Director & Chair, Iberdrola SA (& Criticaleye Board Mentor), for sharing their experiences at the Retreat.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

Investing in leadership development



In this video, we ask our Community about what that investment should look like and the benefits.

Thanks to Stephen Jones, Business Development Director, Brewin Dolphin; Chris Jagusz, Independent Board Advisor; Helen Murray, Chief Customer Solutions Officer, WebHelp UK; Steve Lathrope, CEO, SSP Worldwide; and Jane Griffiths, Non-executive Director, Johnson Matthey (& Criticaleye Board Mentor), for sharing their experiences.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

The value of benchmarking strategy



In this video, we asked experienced leaders about why benchmarking strategy and keeping an eye on the world outside your organisation is so important.

Thanks to Phil Smith, Chair, IQE (& Criticaleye Board Mentor); Neil Griffiths, Non-executive Director, City Pub Group (& Criticaleye Board Mentor); Keith Edelman, Chair, Revolution Bars Group and PennPetro Energy (& Criticaleye Board Mentor); and Sarah Bates, Chair, Merian Global Investors, for giving us their views.

[CLICK HERE TO WATCH THE VIDEO](#)

WANT TO JOIN OUR GROWING COMMUNITY OF CEOS, CFOS, NEDS, HRDS AND OTHER LEADERS? CONTACT: INFO@CRITICALEYE.COM FOR MORE INFORMATION ABOUT HOW WE SUPPORT AND DEVELOP SENIOR EXECUTIVES AND THEIR TEAMS ACROSS A WIDE RANGE OF SECTORS AND ORGANISATIONS.

“At Criticaleye we believe that great leadership creates positive outcomes and enables powerful legacies. Whatever the strategic direction of your business, it’s essential to have an effective, cohesive leadership team in which there is complete trust and alignment.”



Charlie Wagstaff

Managing Director, Criticaleye

We Inspire Leaders to Succeed



Our bespoke solution supports leaders with personal, strategic and team development.

Our unique strength lies in our ability to bring together a wide range of leadership and industry experience.

We invite leaders into a trusted environment, where executives and their teams get access to the insight they need to enhance their performance.

We enable senior executives to address key questions around leadership, strategy and stakeholder management.



Achieve
Better
Performance

Inspiring Leaders to Succeed

Our Values

Respect: an appreciation for diverse and varied views and experiences is crucial to high-performance leadership

Collaboration: working together to share knowledge and expertise is a defining characteristic of effective executive teams

Challenge: strategies and ideas need to be constructively challenged to reach the best outcome

Trust: leaders need to trust their colleagues and peers in order to work effectively and drive results

Integrity: we inspire leaders to succeed by providing a closed and confidential environment where Members can share openly

For more information, please email: info@criticaleye.com

Criticaleye (Europe) Ltd

Blackfriars, 22 Tudor Street
London EC4Y 0AY

T: +44 (0) 20 7350 5100

Criticaleye (Asia) Ltd

23rd Floor, LKF Tower
33 Wyndham Street, Central, Hong Kong

T:+852 6114 3865

www.criticaleye.com

